

can rural economies ever grow if we don't maintain transportation to those States?

When the airline stabilization bill came before the Senate, there were several legitimate reasons for us to support it. In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the federal government had shut down the airlines for nearly three days, dealing a serious blow to their revenues. Furthermore, once the planes were in the air again, the airlines suffered a significant decline in passengers. When we passed the bill, we were looking to ease the blow of the shutdown and subsequent decline in ridership.

Now that I see how the commercial airlines are going to treat small- and mid-sized markets and rural States, it is clear to me that we may have rushed the airline stabilization package. Certainly, if I had known that the airlines were simply going to take the money and then announce they would no longer serve my constituents, I might have thought again about the vote I cast in favor of that package.

I have contacted the Secretary of Transportation to express my concerns and ask for a full review of these scheduled service reductions. I hope that my colleagues will join me in requesting this review, to ensure that the American people are getting a fair return on the investment they have made in the airline industry.

Perhaps the great lesson of the airline stabilization package is that, if we are going to enact policy to build and strengthen our economy, we need to have adequate discussion and debate to ensure that the policies are effective, constructive, and broad-based. In the coming weeks and months, as we take up other matters of economic policy, funding for defense and national security, and agricultural policy, let's take care to consider the ramifications and the realities of what we're dealing with so that we can do what's best for our entire Nation.

DEFENSE NATIONAL STOCKPILE

Mr. CLELAND. Madam President, I am pleased to join the Chairman and our colleagues from the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator COLLINS, and Senator HUTCHINSON, in a colloquy on the forest products industry and the release of materials from the Defense National Stockpile that poses a potential threat to this industry.

The forest products industry is an important industry for our Nation, and for my own State of Georgia as well. It is important in the sense that it provides materials critical to our way of life, and also because it employs a large number of our fellow citizens. It is an industry that reaches into a large number of States. Any process undertaken by a branch of our Federal Government that would harm the forest products industry would, therefore, be likely to draw the attention and the immediate response of this Congress. I

certainly would seek to participate in such a response, and to engender the greatest possible support among my colleagues.

We have been faced in recent weeks with the prospect that the sale or other release of sebacic acid, a lubricant and plasticizer made by the forest product industry, by the Defense National Stockpile might result in the harmful depression of the sebacic acid market and thereby harm the forest products industry. I have been following this matter closely. My staff coordinated a meeting between the officials responsible for the Defense National Stockpile and representatives of the industry, in the hopes that such a meeting and negotiation would resolve any potential problems associated with the authority for Federal sebacic acid release. The officials responsible for the stockpile assured me that the current authorization for release of sebacic acid was not excessive and that the release would be gauged so as not to have a negative impact on the price of sebacic acid. These assurances were made while acknowledging the release of an additional 400,000 pounds of acid, which I understand was needed this year in order to make up for the mismanagement of the contracting process for last year's stockpile release.

The forest products industry in Georgia and, indeed, across the country is highly concerned with this year's proposed release, and has requested that Congress restrict the authorization to release material from the stockpile. Having received assurances from the officials managing the stockpile release, along with their request that we avoid legislation affecting the annual authorization to release sebacic acid, I am here today to serve notice that I will closely follow the scope and effect of any sebacic acid release over the next year. If the release has a negative effect on the market for sebacic acid, I will vigorously pursue legislation in the next authorization bill to curtail future releases of sebacic acid.

Ms. COLLINS. I thank the Senator. As does the Senator from Georgia, I view this matter as one of national importance, deriving from the policies of the Department of Defense, which fall within the oversight of our Committee. I also share his concerns because, as does he and many of our colleagues, I have constituents who depend on the forest products industry for their livelihood.

I am also pleased that we have agreed to this colloquy as a bipartisan expression of our mutual concern over the current Department of Defense release authority for sebacic acid. Having taken this measured step this year, I will monitor the impact of Department of Defense sebacic acid release on the market, and will be ready to join my colleagues in taking legislative action as required.

The fact that an additional amount of acid is being released now, due to the acknowledged contracting miscues

on the part of Department of Defense officials last year, is a further indication that we must be prepared to act in our oversight role to restrict future releases of sebacic acid. The horrible acts of terrorism that befell us on September 11 have had an effect on our economy. I believe the Department must take current economic conditions into account as it implements its releases of sebacic acid over the coming year.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I thank my good friend from Maine, Senator COLLINS, and our distinguished colleagues from the Senate Armed Services Committee. I need not tell them that the forest products industry is an important industry in Arkansas. I will stand with you, if it becomes necessary, to restrict the Department of Defense authorization for release of sebacic acid. I know that we will be joined by many others, on both sides of the aisle. It is easy to see that the impact of this issue has the potential to affect the quality of life of working Americans across any number of states. I find it reassuring that our Committee is making such a strong statement of our intention to act if necessary. Our restraint this year demonstrates the trust we place in the Department of Defense to act reasonably within the scope of current legislative language. But that restraint will turn to resolve if the release of sebacic acid under the current authority proves harmful to the sebacic acid market.

Mr. LEVIN. I appreciate the Senator from Georgia, Mr. CLELAND, bringing this issue to my attention. I also appreciate the fact that the Senators from Georgia, Maine, and Arkansas have sought a colloquy on this issue to avoid offering an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 and thereby slowing its passage in this time of crisis. The current law requires the Department of Defense to ensure that its sales of excess materials from the National Defense Stockpile do not adversely affect the markets for those materials. It is especially important in our current economic situation that the Department not take actions that would harm the private sector. I fully expect that the Department will comply with the law and act prudently in this regard.

AMERICA: 'BACK ON THE JOB'

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, I would like to recognize the tremendous outpouring of solidarity and support from America's citizens in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. The nation's collective reaction to the horror of that day has been one of compassion and focused determination. I am pleased, not just with the response from our elected officials and our opinion-makers, but with all of our citizens across the country who have shown such courage in the face of adversity.

In an outcome that has surely flummoxed the mastermind of this